

KENNEWICK — On a given day you can see folks on the Kennewick waterfront sipping wine, noshing on tacos or barbecue or just soaking up the sunshine and the view at Columbia Gardens, and they can thank the Port of Kennewick for that.

"Our community is growing, and people are saying, 'Why can't I have better access to waterfront? There's other communities that redeveloped their waterfront. We want more," said Port of Kennewick Deputy CEO Tana Bader Inglima.

Columbia Gardens is located on Clover Island, a little spit of land on the Columbia River in the middle of Kennewick just across the railroad tracks from the city's historic downtown. It's home to a lighthouse and a vacht club, wine tasting rooms, food trucks and a barbecue restaurant.

Port districts in Washington are generally associated with more industrial and transportation-related work operating airports and rail lines and attracting manufacturers – than with creating attractive retail space or community gathering places. But Port CEO Tim Arntzen said it's not as off-the-wall as it seems at first glance.

"Port districts have a lot of legislative authority, and we can do lot of different things, but it doesn't mean that you want to or it's a smart thing, so you've got to be careful getting into new things," Arntzen said.

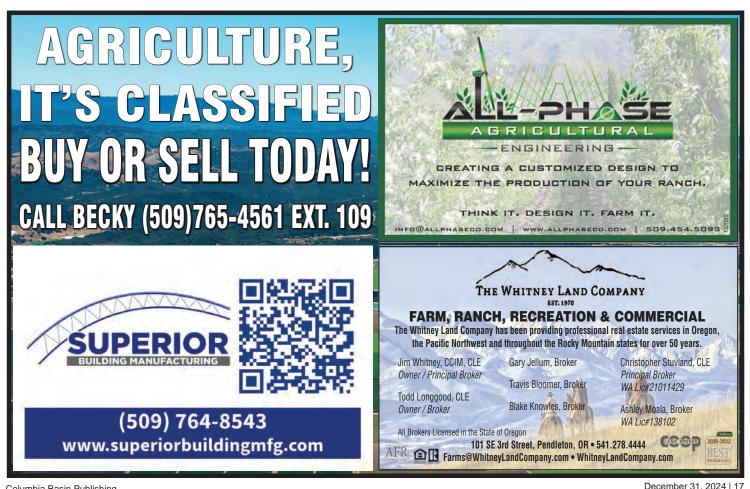
The progression started when the Port of Kennewick

was looking into ways to support Washington's wine industry, Arntzen explained. The Port sent a delegation to California's Napa Valley to see what could be emulated up

"We wanted to create something that would draw visitors in. Because if you start getting the visitors in and they're spending money, that will attract other businesses."

> Tana Bader Inglima, Port of Kennewick

"We were blown away with how advanced California is," Arntzen said. "It's not only the industry end of wine, but it's the tourism end as well. If you go down the Napa Valley on a weekend, it's crazy busy. What we saw down there was, you had to drive from your motel room out into the Napa Valley, and you'd have to drive to all these locations. And we got thinking, what would happen if we brought the wine industry (into) town, in Kennewick, where it's closer?"









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businesses," Bader Inglima said. "There was a wrought iron welding company, there was a tire shop, there was a vending machine supplier, a variety of other businesses there that we helped relocate to property that the port had ... so that we weren't just kicking them to the curb when we acquired their business."

Arntzen's policy was to spend Port money on people rather than lawyers, she added, so the people at a trailer park that the Port bought weren't just kicked out either. The process took about six years, she said.

"We helped work with the folks who had the trailers and purchased some of them outright, because many of them were so old, they weren't up to code, they couldn't be moved elsewhere," she said. "Over the course of about six years, we

to create a more friendly aesthetic

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ESY PHOTO/PORT OF KENNEWICK

At the Port of Kennewick's Columbia

Gardens, storage containers and utility

boxes have been made into works of art

